ERIC Document Resume	See Instruction Sheet	DATE OF RESUME	DATE RECEIVED

A. PUBLICATION DATA

1. ERIC NUMBER	2. ORIGINATOR CONTROL NO(S).	3. IDENTIFICATION NO.
ED001923	NA	NA

DO NOT WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

4. AUTHOR(S):
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction

5. TITLE OF DOCUMENT ABSTRACTED:
Guidelines for Textbook Selection: The Treatment of Minorities

6. PUBLICATION TITLE:
NA

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TYPE OF REPORT
PROPOSAL ☐
IN-PROGRESS ☐
FINAL ☒
FOLLOW-UP ☐

OTHER ERIC REFERENCES:

ERIC SATELLITE CODE

7. EDITOR(S):	8. PLACE OF ORIGIN
NA	ORG. Department of Public Instruction, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
9. PUBLISHER OR SOURCE	CITY, STATE Harrisburg, Penna.
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction	TELE. EXT.
	INST/LOC CODE

10. VOL.	11. PAGES	12. MO./YR.	13. TOTAL PP.
NA	NA	1964	12

B. INDEXING DATA

14. SUBJECT AREA	15. TYPE OF ENDEAVOR
	guidelines

16. INDEXING TERMS (6-12)

textbook selection	prejudice			
textbook production				
minority groups				

17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Material concerning minority groups should be presented if important to an adequate understanding of the subject matter. Presentation should be mature and realistic, and treatment should reflect a respect for cultural differences and human dignity. A checklist is included to aid the teacher in selecting textbooks which give adequate presentation of minority groups. A selected bibliography cites representative works on prejudice, minority groups, techniques of teaching minority groups, and methods of evaluating texts.

ERIC No.

18. SOURCE OF ABSTRACT

C. FUNDING DATA

19. SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	20. DIVISION OR DEPT.	21. CONTRACT NO. / PROJECT NO.
	22. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT	
	23. DURATION OR PROJECT	U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Office of Education

ERIC Form 1

ERIC

ED001923

Guidelines for Textbook Selection

THE TREATMENT OF MINORITIES

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Harrisburg

1964

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Dr. George W. Hoffman
Acting Superintendent
Department of Public Instruction
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Dear Sir:

The Committee on the Treatment of Minorities in Social Studies Textbooks is happy to commend for your use and use by other educators the "guidelines" contained in this publication.

The Committee reviewed the work of others, both in Pennsylvania and in other states, and has defined a set of "guidelines" to help in the production and selection of textbooks which will insure a balanced, factual account of the role of minority groups in our society.

We sincerely trust that this publication will be given wide circulation and use, by both teachers and publishers, to the end that textbooks yet to be published will more adequately reflect the realities of life in this and other lands.

Sincerely,

Donald G. McGarey

Donald G. McGarey
Chairman
Committee on Treatment of
Minorities in Social Studies
Textbooks

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

The current civil rights ferment underscores the seriousness of America's long-standing denial of basic human rights of significant segments of our population. There are unmistakable signs that this hard core of discrimination is being cracked and that the day may not be too far distant when all our citizens will enjoy—in actuality—equal rights.

The Department of Public Instruction has been concerned for some time about the continuing reinforcement of deep-seated prejudice in children that is taking place in some of our schools—both inside and outside the classroom. Part of this is projection of teacher prejudices, part is the teacher's lack of knowledge about minority groups, and part stems from implicit discrimination in written material used by students.

It was to counteract the latter condition that the Department last year invited a group of educators and laymen to study the treatment of minority groups in social studies textbooks and to advise the Department as to means of alerting school districts to possible biased treatments and of seeking the cooperation of publishers in producing more realistic textbooks.

The Committee on Treatment of Minorities in Social Studies Textbooks has reviewed the work already done in this area and has compiled this set of guidelines to help textbook selection committees insure that the books they choose give a balanced, factual account of the role of minority groups in our society.

We strongly urge those charged with this responsibility to use these guidelines in their work and thus help to guarantee that students will be led, in their reading, to an unbiased understanding of all groups in our society.

The Department of Public Instruction would appreciate receiving the results of textbook evaluations made by school districts in the state. In this way it can serve as a clearing house for such efforts. This information should be addressed to the Bureau of General and Academic Education.

I extend to the members of the committee the thanks of the Department for this contribution to better understanding of human relations.

George W. Hoffman

Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction

FOREWORD

In 1962 the Department of Public Instruction published *Our Greatest Challenge–Human Relations.* This guide to intergroup education in schools has been awarded nationwide commendation. It initiated a program relating to the central core of our free democratic society and it reflects the commitment of the public schools of Pennsylvania to the elimination of prejudice.

As a next step in this effort, the Superintendent of Public Instruction late in 1963 appointed a special committee to review the treatment of minority groups in social science textbooks used in the public schools of Pennsylvania. This document is the report of the Committee.

Prejudice is a contagious disease, endemic to the human animal. Every individual harbors some or many of its germs, and its symptoms are present everywhere.

Prejudice manifests itself in many ways, individually and collectively. Sometimes these ways are overt–as in the case of inflammatory expressions of individual prejudice, or in instances of de facto social and economic discrimination on the basis of race, creed, or national origin. While these are the more obvious examples, there are individuals who suffer discrimination because of social, political, and economic groupings. In fact, discrimination almost always exists wherever an individual or small group does not conform to the dominant pattern of the community as a whole; this is the essence of prejudice, against which all of us must be constantly on guard.

Sometimes the manifestations of prejudice are less overt–as in the case of an individual's assignment of simple causes to complex events, and impatience with the quest for truth; or, collectively, in the tendency of social science textbooks of every nation (including our own) to record the actions of that nation historically as always right, to appraise that nation's social and economic institutions in the most favorable light, and to give something less than a balanced treatment to minority groups.

The very fact that this special committee was appointed is a reflection of the growing maturity of American society, its growing awareness of the problems of minority groups, and its growing determination to help solve them.

The members of this committee believe that diversity in unity is beginning to emerge as an American consensus. We are approaching a degree of national maturity in which our long-held central theme of the dignity and worth of the human individual can embrace the concept that objective consideration of the different ideas, the different view, the different heritage and experience can bring a virility and strength to the nation's intellectual and moral fiber that can come in no other way. This is a hopeful harbinger for the future.

It was manifestly impossible for the members of the committee to review, carefully and critically, the hundreds of social science textbooks which are being or might be used in the schools of Pennsylvania. The committee made use of such studies as were already available and which are listed in the bibliography. The committee has provided a set of criteria and commentary which we hope will be helpful to authors, teachers, publishers and administrators as a guide in the preparation and selection of textbooks from the standpoint of appropriate treatment of minority groups.

The members of the committee are aware that many instructional aids are available to supplement textbooks and believe that these materials should be subjected to the same scrutiny as textbooks. In the teaching of controversial issues, materials reflecting a wide range of opinions may properly be used. However, since textbooks are major teaching and learning tools, they inevitably play an important role in shaping attitudes of children. Because of this the committee urges that school boards and administrators seek the advice of competent persons, including teachers who will be using the books, in the screening and selection of texts.

In addition to commending use of these criteria in evaluating textbooks, the committee urges teachers and administrators to inform publishers of the need for balanced treatment of minority groups wherever mention of such groups is appropriate. Futhermore, it strongly recommends that publishers of textbooks make an effort to meet the standards outlined by this guide.

The committee also expresses its hope that competent researchers will direct their attention to the conduct of pertinent studies and the preparation of authoritative histories of minority groups, and make the results available to publishers.

Section I—GUIDELINES FOR THE PRODUCTION AND SELECTION OF TEXTBOOKS

I. ***If material on minorities is important to the consideration of the subject, it should be presented. The problem of minority groups is not necessarily involved in all aspects of social studies instruction and should not be artificially injected.***

A. Discussion of minorities in American society should certainly be included in Problems of Democracy and Sociology courses.

B. Textbooks in American history should include the contributions of minority groups to our developing cultural scene.

C. Pennsylvania has historically been a haven for dissenters and a study of the many cultural, ethnic, and religious groups still in existence would be extremely profitable.

II. ***The treatment of minorities should reflect a respect for personal and cultural differences and the dignity of the individual.***

A. It should develop the concept of a pluralistic society.

B. It should show cultural diversity in both textual and illustrative material, recognizing that merely altering illustrations does not constitute a balanced treatment.

C. It gives attention to the holidays, festivals, and religious observances of various groups.

III. ***Information relative to minorities should be accurate and complete.***

A. Generalizations should be supported by substantiating data and pertinent illustrations.

B. Distinction should be made between fact and opinion.

C. Presentations should not perpetuate stereotypes, name-calling, and outmoded concepts.

D. Distortion should be avoided.

E. Illustrations and examples should provide a balanced picture.

F. Treatment should emphasize both positive and negative aspects of minority groups.

IV. ***All aspects of a subject should be treated adequately.***

A. The focus on contemporary events and ideas should include relevant events and ideas from the past.

B. Varied points of view should be presented.

V. ***The treatment of minorities should be frank, mature, and realistic.***

A. Controversial and unpleasant matters should not be avoided but should be dealt with in proper perspective and proportion.

B. Treatment should be factual and realistic.

C. It should come to grips with issues and problems.

Section II—APPLYING GUIDELINES TO THE SELECTION OF TEXTBOOKS

In applying the foregoing guidelines, a set of specific criteria may be useful to those charged with the responsibility of choosing textbooks as they analyze materials. Members of a committee, composed of teachers, supervisors, and administrators would record their reactions on the checklist form. The group could then summarize and use these reactions as a basis for discussion and elimination in the selection process. A suggested checklist follows:

Title of Book _____

Author _____

Publisher _____ Date _____

_____
Name of Evaluator

	S*	A	U	NP	Page References
1. Includes materials on minorities where relevant					
2. Reflects respect for personal and cultural differences and the worth and importance of the individual					
3. Offers factual, realistic, mature treatment					
4. Gives balanced treatment of past and present					
5. Presents accurate, pertinent information					
6. Comes to grips with issues and problems					
7. Presents varied points of view					
8. Develops concept of pluralistic society					
9. Shows cultural diversity in illustrative materials					
10. Includes cultural diversity in text material					
11. Emphasizes both positive and negative aspects					
12. Avoids distortion and bias					
13. Avoids use of name-calling or emotionally charged words					
14. Supports generalizations with the specific and the concrete					
15. Avoids stereotyping					
16. Aids in building positive attitudes and understandings					
17. Distinguishes between fact and opinion					
18. Gives attention to holidays, festivals, religious observances of various minority groups					
19.					
20.					

* S—Superior A—Acceptable U—Unacceptable NP—Not Pertinent

Summary or General Estimate	*Superior*	*Acceptable*	*Unacceptable*

Special Comments:

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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